Department of State

[Public Notice]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity

(NOFO): FY2019 Youth Ambassadors Program Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0005713

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 19.415 Key Date/Application

Deadline: June 3, 2019

Program Description/Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for the FY 2019 Youth Ambassadors Program. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to administer a program that will recruit and select youth and adult participants, provide the participants with three-week exchanges focused on civic education, community service, and youth leadership development, and support follow-on programs in their home communities. The Youth Ambassadors program directly supports the U.S. foreign policy goal of youth empowerment and development by equipping exchange participants with the knowledge and skills to become active and responsible members of their communities. The program will build mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect through shared culture and values, empower participants to be actively engaged in addressing issues of concern in their schools and communities upon their return home; and foster relationships among youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups. Exchange delegations will travel to the United States from Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, the Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela; U.S. exchange delegations will travel to select countries. The Bureau anticipates that the single award recipient will manage the comprehensive organizational and administrative responsibilities of this program, and will identify qualified sub-award recipients to implement programming for at least 60 percent of the exchange participants. The award will provide funding for approximately 459 exchange participants (339 foreign and 120 U.S.). It is the Bureau's intent to award a cooperative agreement (one base year plus two non-competitive continuations in FY2020 and FY2021) for an estimated total amount of \$10,200,000. Please see section B.) Federal Award Information, below for additional details.

A. Program Description:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United

States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Purpose:

The Youth Ambassadors program provides participants with a comprehensive survey of civic education, community service, and youth leadership development, building their knowledge and skill levels in these areas and supporting them to become active and responsible members of their communities. The program includes a three-week exchange for high school youth (ages 15-18 at the start of the program) and adult educators focused on these themes and on subthemes such as social inclusion, entrepreneurship, innovation, and environmental protection. Participants engage in a variety of activities such as workshops on leadership and service, community site visits related to the program themes and subthemes, interactive training, presentations, visits to high schools, local cultural activities, homestays, civic education programming in Washington, D.C., or the capital city of the partner country, and other activities designed to achieve the program's stated goals. Multiple opportunities for participants to interact meaningfully with their host country peers will be included. Follow-on activities with the participants are an integral part of the program, as the students apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired by planning service programs in their home communities.

The FY 2019 Youth Ambassadors program will include the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, the Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela and the United States. It is anticipated that foreign participants will travel from all of these countries to the United States, and that American participants will travel to select countries (see below). The Bureau reserves the right to add or delete countries from this list should conditions change in partner countries or if other countries are identified as U.S. Department of State priorities.

The program goals are to:

- 1) Promote mutual understanding between the people of the United States and citizens of Western Hemisphere countries
- 2) Prepare youth leaders to become responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities
- 3) Foster future leaders by providing them a better understanding of the U.S. systems, culture, and government
- 4) Cultivate relationships among youth from different ethnic, racial, religious, and national groups and create hemispheric networks of youth leaders, both within the participating countries and internationally

The program objectives are for participants to:

- 1) Demonstrate a better understanding of the elements of a participatory democracy in action
- 2) Deepen critical thinking and leadership skills
- 3) Develop program planning and implementation skills

The primary program themes are:

- 1) Civic Education (Citizen Participation, Grassroots Democracy and Rule of Law)
- 2) Community Service
- 3) Youth Leadership Development

For each exchange, applicant organizations must focus on these primary themes. Subthemes, such as social inclusion, entrepreneurship, innovation, and environmental protection may serve to illustrate the more abstract concepts of the primary themes. For example, the subtheme of environmental protection can be used to examine how a group of individuals demonstrate leadership and service by initiating a recycling campaign in their community. The subtheme should be integrated into most aspects of the program, including workshops, presentations and community service.

Using these goals, objectives, and themes, applicant organizations should identify their own specific and measurable outputs and outcomes based on the program specifications provided in this solicitation.

Program Options:

Total funding for the FY 2019 base year of the program is approximately \$3,400,000. ECA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement for the management of the Youth Ambassadors program. ECA reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal program configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. In addition, ECA reserves the right to adjust the participating countries should conditions change in partner countries or if other countries are identified as U.S. Department of State priorities.

Organizations may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process. ECA strongly urges organizations to consider in which countries they exhibit the strongest organizational capacity, and to explain how they will administer the sub-award arrangement. The organization's capacity to conduct exchanges and administer subawards must be thoroughly described in the proposal. ECA encourages applicants to be creative and flexible in making arrangements that will help meet our program goals. The proposal must outline how the organization will provide exchanges for all countries in the Youth Ambassadors program, and specify which will be conducted by the primary award recipient and which will be administered through subaward recipients.

Applicants should address how to send a large delegation representing multiple countries to the United States at one time and must propose a plan to break them into smaller cohorts for most of the exchange activities. This will ensure that all participants actively take part in the exchange and that program staff can adequately monitor the safety and well-being of the participants. Applicants must hold the welcome and closing orientations with the entire delegation.

Applicants are required to have in-country capacity or partner organizations for all countries except for Brazil and the Caribbean, where the U.S. embassies will be responsible for participant recruitment. Applicants should expect to work closely with in-country partners and embassies to ensure the program meets State Department goals.

Total participant numbers: the program will provide exchanges between countries throughout the Americas for a total of approximately 459 participants (339 foreign exchange participants and 120 U.S. exchange participants).

There will be several exchanges, some of them reciprocal. Exchanges will be divided into either single country or multi-country programs; they should be organized as follows:

Single Country Programs:

Brazil

This is one reciprocal exchange for English-speaking participants from Brazil and the United States.

Approximately 52 Brazilians (50 youth and 2 adults) will travel to the United States, and 30 U.S. participants will travel to Brazil. The U.S. Embassy in Brasilia will serve as the in-country partner and the programming will be in English. The embassy will manage Brazilian participant recruitment and selection, cover Brazilian participants' in-country expenses, arrange and purchase their international travel, oversee their follow-on activities, and administer the Brazil-based exchange activities for the U.S. participants. The award recipient or implementing partner will be responsible for organizing and funding the U.S.-based exchange activities for the Brazilian participants. The award recipient or implementing partner also will be responsible for U.S. participant recruitment and selection, U.S. participants' pre-departure expenses, including international travel, all program expenses in Brazil for U.S. participants, and U.S. participants' follow-on activities. The exchange to the United States will take place in January 2020, and the exchange to Brazil will take place in summer 2020.

Canada

This is one exchange program conducted in English for Canadian citizens with a subtheme of social inclusion. Approximately 15 participants (13 youth and 2 adults) will travel to the United States in summer 2020. Recruitment must focus on new Canadians (first generation Canadians and Canadians born outside Canada), and members of the First Nations, and marginalized populations.

Haiti

This is one exchange program conducted in French for Haitian citizens. Approximately 15 participants (13 youth and 2 adults) from Haiti will travel to the United States in 2020. Participants will not need English skills to participate and applicants should propose programming in French and provide for interpretation.

Regional/Multi-Country Programs:

Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Ecuador and Venezuela

These are reciprocal exchanges in English for participants from select countries and the United States. Participants from nine South American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Ecuador, and Venezuela) will travel to the United States and U.S. participants will travel to select countries.

Approximately 15 participants from each South American country listed above will travel to the United States (approximately 135 in total); approximately 60 U.S. participants will travel to at least two countries within this group: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Ecuador and Uruguay. Applicants should propose sending U.S. participants to countries where they or their implementing partner can provide the most comprehensive programming for them. Exchanges can be grouped according to organizational capacity, but the grantee and implementing organizations also should be flexible in designing programs based on State Department guidance.

Central America and the Dominican Republic

These are three exchanges for seven Central American countries and the Dominican Republic. Participants from Central America and the Dominican Republic will travel to the United States and U.S. participants will travel to select countries in the region. Approximately 10 participants from each country (Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama), 80 total, will travel to the United States. The organization should be prepared to conduct the program in either English or Spanish based on State Department guidance.

Proposals should include two exchanges for approximately 15 U.S. participants each (30 total) to travel to at least two of the eligible countries (Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, and Panama). Applicants should only propose sending U.S. participants to countries where they or their implementing partner can provide the most comprehensive programming for them. American participants going to predominantly Spanish-speaking countries should have intermediate conversational Spanish skills.

Caribbean

This is one exchange conducted in English for approximately 42 participants selected from the Caribbean (the Bahamas, Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago and other smaller Caribbean countries served by Embassy Bridgetown listed below).

For this program, the U.S. embassies in the participating countries will serve as the incountry partners and will recruit and select the participants. Proposals should note the applicant's willingness to work with the program office and participating U.S. embassies to finalize proposed country groupings and dates for the exchanges once an award is made. The award recipient must detail how they plan to coordinate in-country costs related to recruitment, selection, and pre-departure orientation. The award recipient must work closely with the embassy to ensure that they have the support required to screen and interview the participants, and manage the budgets for the selection process and pre-departure orientation.

Please note that Embassy Bridgetown (Barbados) serves several eastern Caribbean countries and the participants Embassy Bridgetown selects may come from any of the following countries: Antigua and Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and/or St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Participants:

All youth and adult participants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- 1) Be citizens of the country from which they are applying (dual U.S. citizens are not eligible);
- 2) Be selected through a merit-based competition;
- 3) Represent the diversity of their home country; and
- 4) Demonstrate an interest in the partner country and the program themes.

Selection criteria for the participants will include leadership skills, an interest in community service, strong academic and social skills, openness and flexibility. To reach beyond the elite, participants should be recruited from underserved or disadvantaged populations of youth in these countries. Geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic diversity is important, including outreach to indigenous and Afro-descendant populations. It is desirable that participants be clustered by community to facilitate future collaboration upon their return to their home country.

The youth participants must be high school students aged 15 to 18 years old at the start of the exchange, with at least one semester of high school remaining. The adult participants may be teachers, trainers, school administrators, and/or community leaders who work with youth. They will have the role of chaperone, exchange participant, and post-exchange mentor. The ratio of youth to adults should be approximately 10:1, depending on the size of the exchange delegation. Preference should be given to individuals who have not previously traveled to the exchange country, especially on a U.S. government-sponsored program.

For the programs that will be conducted in English, the participants must have sufficient English language proficiency to participate fully in interactions with their host families and their peers and in all educational activities. Programs conducted in Spanish or in French do not require English-speaking participants. For the U.S.-based activities that will be conducted in Spanish or French, the award recipient or implementing partner must

provide interpretation and must place participants who do not speak English with host families where at least one member speaks Spanish or French. Some Spanish language ability is required for the American participants traveling to the Spanish-language program countries. Portuguese is not required for the U.S. participants traveling to Brazil.

Organizational Capacity:

Applicant organizations must demonstrate their capacity for conducting international youth exchanges, focusing on three areas of competency: (1) provision of programs that address the goals, objectives, and themes outlined in this document; (2) age-appropriate programming for youth; and (3) previous experience working on programs in the region. Organizations must demonstrate their capacity to manage a complex, multi-phase program with several separate exchange programs.

Organizations applying for this award must demonstrate their organizational capacity in the administration and oversight of international youth exchange programs, leadership programming, and related cultural activities and youth leadership training.

In addition to their U.S. presence, applicants must have the organizational capacity in the relevant countries through their own offices or through an implementing partner organization to recruit and select participants for the program, to provide follow-on activities, and to organize a content-rich program for the U.S. participants, if specified. The importance of a viable, experienced in-country partner cannot be over-emphasized and details of this capacity should be addressed. Applicants should consult with their partners and involve them in the proposal preparation if possible. Before submitting a proposal, applicants may consult with Public Affairs Sections in U.S. embassies concerning the selection and reliability of in-country partner organizations. Please e-mail ECA Program Officer Stephanie Jensby (JensbySA@state.gov) for embassy contact information.

U.S. Embassy Involvement:

It is important that the proposal narrative clearly state the applicant's commitment to consult closely with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. embassy in the host country to develop plans for program implementation, including recruitment, selection and orientation of participants, publicity events, and follow-on activities, once a cooperative agreement is awarded. In countries where there is a reciprocal component involving U.S. citizen minors, the U.S. embassy will provide oversight and monitoring; concur on housing arrangements, including host family locations (regions, neighborhoods); represent the U.S. Government while the exchange activities are taking place in the host country; and assist program staff and participants in the event of an emergency. At the same time, the cooperative agreement requires that the administering organization must be able to manage the program in the host country in its entirety, with little reliance on embassy staff for support. For the Brazil region and the Caribbean region, the U.S. embassies will serve as the in-country partners, subject to change.

Guidelines:

It is anticipated that the cooperative agreement will begin on or about August 1, 2019 and end on March 31, 2022. The FY19 base year award period will span 15 months, and will cover all aspects of the programming in South America, Central America, the Caribbean, Haiti, Canada and the United States – participant recruitment, selection, and orientation, three weeks of exchange activities, and support of follow-on activities. Planning and preparation will start in 2019, and the exchanges will take place at various points throughout 2020. Applicants should propose the period of the exchange(s) in their proposals, but the exact timing of each program may be altered through the mutual agreement of the U.S. Department of State and the recipient.

Additional Information:

Award recipients will retain the name "Youth Ambassadors Program" to identify their program. All materials, publicity, and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State. ECA will retain copyright use of and be allowed to distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

Proposals must demonstrate how the applicant will meet the stated objectives. The proposal narrative should provide detailed information on the major program activities, and applicants should explain and justify their programmatic choices. Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations for the International Visitor and Government Visitor category. Please be sure to refer to the complete Solicitation Package – this NOFO, the POGI, and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) – for further information.

In a cooperative agreement, ECA/PE/C/PY is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. These activities and the roles and responsibilities of the Department and your organization are outlined in the attached POGI.

Proposal narratives should include a brief commitment to implement the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuations, pending successful performance and the availability of funds. The narrative should focus on details specific to the implementation of the base year program, with the understanding that the program design, duration and participant numbers would be similar when/if the subsequent two non-competitive continuations are exercised. ECA will perform an annual performance evaluation/review to determine if a non-competitive continuation will be exercised. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds is a condition of continued administration of the program and execution of all non-competitive continuations.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement.

ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description. **Fiscal Year Funds:** FY 2019-\$3,400,000; FY 2020-non-competitive continuation year one-\$3,400,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds; FY 2021-

non-competitive continuation year two-\$3,400,000, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: \$10,200,000. This figure represents base year plus two Non-Competitive Continuation years, pending successful performance and the availability of funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: One **Approximate Average Award:** \$3,400,000

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: \$3,400,000 Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2019

Anticipated Project Completion Date: March 31, 2022. This date reflects the anticipated duration of the award – one base year plus two non-competitive continuation years.

Additional Information:

A cooperative agreement will be awarded for a period of 15 months (base year) with non-competitive continuations for two additional 15 month periods (non-competitive continuation years one and two). ECA will notify the recipient of our intention to exercise or not to exercise a non-competitive continuation at least 90 days in advance of expiration of the current year after an internal evaluation of the recipient's performance. The decision to exercise a non-competitive continuation will depend both on the satisfactory performance of the recipient and the availability of funds.

The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

C.) Eligibility Information:

- **C.1. Eligible applicants:** Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).
- **C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds:** There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

- a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount over \$130,000 to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.
- b.) Technical Eligibility: All proposals must comply with the requirements stated in the NOFO, POGI, and the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI); non-compliance will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.
- Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note**: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

D.) Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package: Please contact the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, SA-5, 202-632-9352, U.S. Department of State, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, jensbysa@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify Program Officer Stephanie Jensby and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at

https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding or from the Grants.gov website at https://www.grants.gov.

- **D.2a.** Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.
- **D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number:** You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access http://www.dnb.com or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html
- **D.3b.** Required Proposal Elements: All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

D.3c. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM): All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html

D.3d. Non-Profit Status: You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. Please note: All applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.
- **D.3e. FFATA Report:** In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.
- **D.3f.** Verifying Non-Profit Status: If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.
- **D.3g.** Required Registration with SAMS Domestic: All ECA award recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories must be registered with the U.S. Department of State's SAMS Domestic by accessing https://mygrants.service-now.com and clicking the "create an account" link. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). Recipient organizations and recipient contacts and signatories that have previously used SAMS Domestic as a U.S. Department of State award recipient do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact the ILMS Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Recipient Organizations and recipient contacts and signatories is available 24 hours, 7 days a week (except federal holidays), and can be reached at 1-888-313-ILMS (4567) or through the ILMS Self Service Portal at https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home.

In the event the ILMS Help Desk is unable to provide you with assistance in a timely manner, please contact <u>ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov</u> and copy the program officer associated with the solicitation.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.3h. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA: The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this NOFO, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J visa program). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this NOFO will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J visa program status. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated Exchange Visitor Program Sponsor, the applicant should discuss their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at http://jlvisa.state.gov or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division U.S. Department of State SA-4E (Bldg. 3) 2430 E Street, NW Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender

identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program <u>outputs</u> and <u>outcomes</u>. <u>Outputs</u> are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. <u>Outcomes</u>, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

- 1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
- 2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
- 3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
- 4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our <u>International Exchange Alumni</u> space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

- **D.31.** Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients: All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in ECA's Communications Guidance on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.
- **D.3m.** Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:
- **D.3n.** Applicants must submit SF-424A "Budget Information Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

For competitions that will be renewed through a non-competitive continuation, <u>applicants</u> must submit:

- the SF-424A which must include the budget request amount for the base-year of the program;
- a detailed proposal narrative and budget for the base year of funding (Please refer
 to the Proposal Submission Instruction Document (PSI) for general budget
 guidance.). The narrative should also include a brief commitment to implement
 the program for the base year, plus two additional non-competitive continuation
 years, pending successful program performance and availability of funds; and
- an abbreviated/estimated summary budget presenting the total projected administrative and program costs for the anticipated total duration of programming (base year, plus two non-competitive continuation years).

To exercise the non-competitive continuation mechanism the recipient will be required to submit:

- 1. semi-annual performance and financial reports on time;
- 2. a request in writing to ECA at least 90 days in advance of the expiration of the current program year;
- 3. a summary budget that projects program expenses through the end of the current year;
- 4. a detailed budget outlining both administrative and program expenses for the requested non-competitive continuation year; and
- 5. a brief narrative to support the continuation of the award.

The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will:

- 1.) Closely monitor the recipient's performance through site visits, desk audits, mandatory quarterly performance and financial reports, consultations, and other forms of communication and dialogue before exercising additional non-competitive continuations. (Additional details regarding monitoring and oversight of the program by ECA representatives will be provided at the time the base-year award is made.)
- 2.) Review and evaluate all mandatory quarterly program and financial reports;

- All program and financial reporting requirements must be current and up-to-date before the Bureau will exercise additional non-competitive continuations.
- Any/all concerns, issues, or modifications requested by the Grants Officer or Program Officer to the original program design or method of implementation must be responded to in writing.
- The ECA Grants Officer and Program Officer will review and advise of ECA's approval or disapproval of the response before issuing subsequent noncompetitive continuations.
- 3.) Prior Grants Officer approval is required to carry forward an unobligated balance from a prior funding period to the subsequent funding period. If the Grants Officer determines that some or all of the unobligated funds are not necessary to perform the program activity, the Grants Officer may decline the Recipient's request to carry forward the unobligated balance.

The Grants Officer may, at their discretion, use the unobligated balance to reduce or offset future funding for a subsequent funding period. An unobligated balance at the end of a funding period is not sufficient justification to carry forward funds. A final determination and approval to carry forward any funds will be communicated via a cost amendment with adjustment, if any, to new obligation amounts.

- i. The request to carry forward an unobligated balance must include:
 - a. A brief narrative why funds remain unobligated and how the unobligated funds will be used to complete the previously approved goals and objectives of the program; and,
 - b. A detailed budget that reflects the amount of unobligated funds to date, and anticipated expenditures in the subsequent period of performance for all cost categories under the authorized budget.

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program are outlined in the POGI:

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Monday, June 3, 2019 Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Search Grants" portion of the system.

D.3q. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html).

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-forgrants.html

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Please also be mindful of any Grants.gov generated error messages that may appear during the application process as they may result in some documents not transmitting correctly.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov. Prior to submitting applications through Grants.gov, please ensure you meet all Grants.gov system and software requirements, including Adobe software compatibility. You can verify if your version of Adobe software is compatible with Grants.gov, by visiting https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3r. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau

regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

- **1. Quality of the program idea:** Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission. Relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
- **2. Ability to achieve program objectives:** The objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program guidelines described in this solicitation. Proposals should include plans for administering and managing the overall program, as well as working with sub-award implementing organizations to carry out programs as outlined in the POGI. The responsibilities, capacity, and expertise of proposed implementing organizations should be clearly delineated.
- **3. Support of Diversity:** Proposals should show substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that proposals have a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.
- **4. Institutional Capacity:** Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. The personnel, expertise, experience, and institutional resources of the applicant and each proposed subaward implementing organization should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by Bureau Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
- **5. Follow-on Activities:** Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.
- **6. Project Evaluation**: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the program's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique

plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

7. Cost-effectiveness and Cost-Sharing: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Award Notices: Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Post Award Activity* under the corresponding record for this Cooperative

Agreement/Grant in the U.S. Department of State's <u>SAMS Domestic</u>. SAMS Domestic is the U.S. Department of State's grants management system and is supported by the Department's Integrated Logistics Management System (ILMS). For assistance, please contact the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Help Desk at 1-888-313-4567 (toll free for US callers) or through the U.S. Department of State's ILMS Self Service Portal at https://afsitsm.service-now.com/ilms/home. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: http://www.dpm.psc.gov/. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to SAMS Domestic, in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's

In the event you are having difficulty uploading reports and the ILMS help desk is not providing sufficient assistance, please email ECA_SAMSDomestic@state.gov.

eligibility for future Cooperative Agreements/Grants.

- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award; A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.
- 4.) Because the competition will allow for the exercise of non-competitive continuations (NCC), applicants must be placed on a bi-annual program and financial reporting cycle. The due dates for these reports will be included in the final assistance award document. The program and financial reports must demonstrate substantial progress by addressing progress towards the original approved goals and objectives, relative activities and events, and supporting fiscal data. The reports will be reviewed by both the assigned Grant Officer and Program Officer.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

F.4. Program Data Requirements: Award recipients will be required to maintain specific data on program participants and activities in an electronically accessible

database format that can be shared with the Bureau as required. At a minimum, the data must include the following:

- 1) Name, address, contact information and biographic sketch of all persons who travel internationally on funds provided by the agreement or who benefit from the award funding but do not travel.
- 2) Itineraries of international and domestic travel, providing dates of travel and cities in which any exchange experiences take place. Final schedules for in-country and U.S. activities must be received by the ECA Program Officer at least three work days prior to the official opening of the activity.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Stephanie Jensby, U.S. Department of State, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, SA-5, Third Floor, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, 202-632-9352, jensbysa@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:

Notice:

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Marie Royce April 2, 2019 Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs U.S. Department of State